

WASHINGTON, DC— Congressman Joe Courtney today sent a letter to Chief Justice John Roberts calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to televise oral arguments in its review of the Affordable Care Act. The Court is expected to hear oral arguments in March.

In his letter, Courtney said: “Given the intense public interest in this process and the significant repercussions of its outcome, there is no clearer case for transparency and openness in the court’s deliberations than this case. The ability to view these proceedings will not only allow the American public an opportunity to better appreciate the core of our judicial system, it will also allow them the opportunity to better understand the deliberations behind the court’s ultimate decision.”

The full text of Courtney’s letter is below:

November 16, 2011

The Honorable John Roberts
Chief Justice
The Supreme Court
One First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20543

Dear Justice Roberts,

I am writing to urge the Supreme Court to allow audio and televised broadcasting of the Court’s proceedings in regards to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). These proceedings, and the decision to follow, will have a profound impact on the American public, and I urge the Court to use its discretion in favor of the public right to know which is central to a functioning, transparent democracy and to permit television coverage of these oral arguments.

This case is of extreme historical significance and intense public interest. In an unprecedented

move, the Court will hear five and a half hours of oral argument over various aspects of the law. However, the single largest issue facing the court is the constitutionality of the so-called "individual mandate" that requires most Americans purchase health insurance. Three out of four appellate courts have rejected challenges to the law, including two that specifically upheld the individual mandate as constitutional and within Congress's power to regulate interstate commerce under the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Given the intense public interest in this process and the significant repercussions of its outcome, there is no clearer case for transparency and openness in the court's deliberations than this case. The ability to view these proceedings will not only allow the American public an opportunity to better appreciate the core of our judicial system, it will also allow them the opportunity to better understand the deliberations behind the court's ultimate decision.

Broadcasting these arguments will help to enhance the fundamental values of our democratic system by encouraging the open and transparent government that is essential to our democratic process. Allowing both audio and video coverage of these historic proceedings will be of great benefit to the American public, and I urge the Court to permit cameras to follow the proceedings live and provide public access to the court's deliberations in this landmark case.

Sincerely,

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

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